

Winter 2003

NHCSW



New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women

Message from the Executive Director

One of the loneliest experiences of my life was writing my dissertation, sequestered for entire days and most of my nights in an extremely small room I called an office. Just big enough for my desk, my computer, and me, the room resembled a crowded nest, lined with drafts and notes and stacks of overdue library books. One day, desperate in my isolation, I typed a note to my future self, a reminder that the inherent solitude of the present project would one day pay off. The saved document had the date as its title: "October 15, 1999."

I forgot about that note until recently, discovered while transferring files to a new computer: "I hope

for myself a life that makes a difference, learning from people who use power productively, working with people committed to possibility."

In writing that note years ago, it was as though I had a premonition of the women I today so deeply admire who serve on the New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women. It was, more specifically, as though I had met already Molly Kelly, Lucy Hodder, Barbara Zeckhausen, and Jane Stapleton—the officers of the Commission for the past six years, now leaving as their terms expire. Each, in her own unique way, has been instrumental in refining the mission of the Commis-

sion, extending its outreach and impact, enhancing its ability to serve the women of the state.

Molly, Lucy, Barb and Jane pass on a mantle with a brilliant flame to our new officers: Pat Yousha, Chair; Elizabeth Corell, Vice Chair, and Laurie Chandler, Treasurer. The Commission also welcomes new members Linda Johnson, Jan Markey, and Shannon McGinley. These women promise to lend their own leadership and expertise to the Commission as it continually evolves to meet the changing needs of New Hampshire women.

*Terri de Langis, Ph.D.
Executive Director*

New Hampshire Girls Connect

The Commission on the Status of Women, in partnership with the Christa McAuliffe Planetarium, Girls Incorporated of New Hampshire, and the Robot Chicks Union, sponsored the first annual robotics workshop and competition this past April. Twenty-seven middle school girls participated in the two-day program held at the Courtyard Marriott in Concord. The girls were split up into teams and spent the first day build-

ing and programming their Lego robots. They then walked to the Christa McAuliffe Planetarium for dinner, a sky show, and a slumber party. The second day was reserved for the competition. The four teams had to complete a number of tasks with their robots while four judges looked on. The judges' final decisions were based on robot design, programming, team work, team spirit, and creativity. The **Fembots** were chosen to

receive the grand prize of a registration fee to the FIRST Lego Competition. Governor Benson attended the awards ceremony and gave the closing speech, explaining the importance of women and girls in the nontraditional fields of science, math, and technology.



New Hampshire Girls Connect!

Inside this issue:

New Hampshire Women and Girls	2
New England Women's Political Summit	2
Save the Date	2
Commissioner Spotlight	3
NHCSW Resources	3
Donations	3
Legislative Agenda	4

Girls in Nontraditional Studies

In 1999, 12.4% of the 1,888 candidates for engineers, architects, surveyors and related technicians at the University of New Hampshire were women.

Women's colleges produce four times as many female research scientists and scholars as do coeducational institutions, and their graduates are twice as likely to earn a Ph.D.

New Hampshire Women & Girls

Ex-Sight Award

The Commission on the Status of Women presented the first ever Ex-Sight Award to Kristen Kelso at the New Hampshire Girls Connect program this past April. The award is given to someone who's insight, inspiration, and action has changed the way we see the world. Kristen has been a member of Central High School's FIRST robotics team and is the president and co-founder of the Robot Chicks Union. Her passion for the nontraditional fields of science, math and technology is an inspiration to the Commission.

Kristen also encourages other young women to follow their passions and reach for the stars.



Kristen Kelso (right) with Executive Director Terri de Langis

"Atta Girl"

Periodically, the Commission sends "Atta Girl" letters to recognize women for the positive difference they make to our state. 2003 recipients include **Dr. Selma Deitch**, recipient of the Martin Luther King Award; **Executive Councilor Ruth Griffin**, recipient of the Life of Service Award; **Katie Parrish**, a Gilford High School student who worked to make sure the Union Meeting House in Gilford was listed in the state Registry of Historic Places; **Dr. Gwendolyn Gladstone**, an Exeter pediatrician who works as an advocate for abused children; **Leslie LaGrenade**, the first woman state trooper in New Hampshire; and **Patricia Gallup**, recipient of the 2003 Public Company Entrepreneur of the Year Award.



Claire Houston (center) with Commission members and staff.

Women's Recognition Award

The Commission is happy to announce the 2003 Women's Recognition Award recipient. Claire Houston of Exeter was chosen for her accomplishments and contributions in providing resources, support and empowerment to women in New Hampshire. Ms. Houston is the founder and Executive Director of the Women Supporting Women Center, which offers classes and discussion groups to women who are in need of counseling and support. Ms. Houston has created an environment in which women can gain the skills and the support needed to change their lives for the better. Visit the Commission website to learn more about this award and to view the other nominations for the 2003 award.

New England Women's Political Summit

The Commission recently partnered with the Center for Women in Politics & Public Policy at the University of Massachusetts Boston for a **New England Women's Political Summit**. This two day summit brought together New England women who are involved or interested in increasing women's participation in politics and public policy. Over forty New Hampshire women attended the summit. Executive Councilor Ruth Griffin participated in one of the summit's panel discussions on the "state of the states."

The Summit was used to bring together activists, legislators, nonprofit organizations and state agencies to create action plans for encouraging women to become politically active and to run for local, state or federal office. Each state came together to create realistic strategies that could be implemented within the next few years.

Summit participants were then split up and had the opportunity to meet with different states to share ideas and strategies. The Summit ended

with an inspiring call to action for all participants. The Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy offered their support and expertise to all New England states in the implementation of their action plans and strategies.

The Commission is now in the process of convening Summit participants and other interested parties to come together and create a comprehensive action plan to motivate and inspire New Hampshire women to become more involved in politics and public policy throughout the state.

Save the Date

The Commission, in partnership with the state Treasurer, will host a **Women and Money Conference** May 14, 2004 at Southern New Hampshire University, Manchester. The free, daylong conference will focus on money management, retirement, and investment strategies for women of all ages, economic levels and financial skills. The Conference goal is to empower women by giving them the tools needed to control their lives by managing their money.

The **2004 New Hampshire High School Women's Athletic/Academic Awards** is scheduled to take place February 5 at the Capitol Center for the Arts in Concord. Nominees for this annual award must attend a New Hampshire high school; hold a B+ grade point average; have lettered in two varsity sports during high school years and be a current athlete in these sports; and serve as a positive role model to peers by participating in community service activities

and by demonstrating the qualities of good citizenship. This award serves to honor and recognize the achievements of the young women across the state. Nomination materials are now available on the Commission website.

**PLEASE CONTACT THE NHCSW
OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON UPCOMING EVENTS**

Commissioner Spotlight

The Commission is comprised of 15 members who are appointed by the Governor and Executive Council. Members are non-salaried and serve a maximum of two, three year terms.

Molly Kelly

Molly Kelly, Keene, has served on the Commission since October of 1997. She was appointed Commission Chair by then Governor Jeanne Shaheen soon after. After having three children, Ms. Kelly knew she needed to go back to school. To her, returning to school was “like someone opened a window and blew light into my life.” The combination of raising children and returning to school greatly inspired Ms. Kelly to work on behalf of women both inside and outside of her career. The work of Mary Wollstonecraft and the idea of basic, universal rights for all people



Commissioner Molly Kelly

also has impacted her personally and professionally. The Commission has accomplished a great deal since Ms. Kelly’s appointment six years ago. In her words, an important accomplishment came “by defining the Commission and its goals. We then became a strong, unified voice for the women of New Hampshire.” When asked how serving on the Commission has affected her personally, Ms. Kelly replied, “being a part of this Commission has empowered and validated my own beliefs and has increased my understanding of women and the different issues that affect women on a daily basis.”

Jane Stapleton

Jane Stapleton, Durham, has served on the Commission since October of 1997. She served as the Commission Treasurer from 1998 to 2002. Ms. Stapleton was nominated and appointed to the Commission after a term with

the New Hampshire Coalition Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. While Ms. Stapleton has been and continues to be inspired by many women in her life, being the director at the Sexual Harassment and Rape Prevention Program at the University of New Hampshire and working with the women there “inspired me to be persistent in my advocacy and not to back down on things I felt strongly about.” With the help of Ms. Stapleton, the Commission has accomplished a great many things in the past six years. Ms. Stapleton believes that the most important work has been in the policy and legislative work of the Commission. “We have been a strong voice for women and girls in the state and it has been essential to have our voices heard in places where decisions are made throughout the state.” Ms. Stapleton feels that she has “benefited greatly from working with a diverse group of women throughout the state.”

NHCSW Resources

The Commission’s first annual **Resource Swap** was held this past July in partnership with the Women’s Bar Association. The event took place at the law offices of Rath, Young and Pignatelli. Close to fifty organizations joined together for an afternoon of networking and resource sharing. Participating organizations were able to share information and materials to better serve the citizens of New Hampshire. Here are a few of the new guides available at the Commission office or by visiting our website at www.nh.gov/csw.

First Stop

First Stop is a comprehensive directory of New Hampshire services. It contains hundreds of organizations and companies that are available to assist women and families with such issues as domestic and sexual violence, housing, employment, and many more.

Manual for Title IX Coordinators: Sexual Harassment Prevention in the Schools

The Commission’s *Gender Equity in Education Task Force* created this manual for educators and school personnel. It is intended to be used as a tool to help

address and prevent harassment in New Hampshire schools. The Manual is available in hard copy at the Commission office for a small fee.

Dollars for Change: Funding Resources for Nonprofit Organizations

This directory offers a comprehensive list of grants available to New Hampshire nonprofit organizations.

VIEW AND DOWNLOAD ALL
NHCSW RESOURCES AT
WWW.NH.GOV/CSW

Donations

Many of the Commission’s publications and projects would not be possible without the generous contributions of others. We would like to thank the following people for their dedication to the women and girls of New Hampshire:

Beverly Joyce Design Solutions for the graphic design of the Commission’s new brochure.

Chris Latulip for donating her expertise in facilitating the Commission’s Strategic Planning.

Heather Bell and **Rachael Lastoff** for volunteering their time this summer as CSW interns.

Also, tax-deductible donations can be made to NHCSW in honor in memory of a specific person. A card will be sent to the person or their family, and the person’s name will appear in the

newsletter along with the name of the donor.

Governor Jeanne Shaheen is honored by Molly Kelly.

Johannah Violet Deziel is welcomed into the world by Jessica Stern.

Victor Metoyer is remembered by Theresa de Langis.

Attorney Rachel Yosha is honored by her mother, Patricia Yosha.



New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women

Room 414, State House Annex

Concord, NH 03301

Tel: 603.271.2660

Fax: 603.271.4032

TDD Access: Relay NH 1.800.735.2964

www.nh.gov/csw

New Hampshire Commission on the Status of Women

A Commission that works

On behalf of the diverse population
of the state's women

To provide a voice of advocacy
in legislative and public policy issues

To remedy historical and institutional
gender discrimination

To enhance opportunities in education and
training, business and employment

To honor the achievements of
New Hampshire women.

*Strengthening the State,
Empowering New Hampshire Women*

For an electronic subscription, please contact the
Commission office:
603.271.2660
cmsweb@admin.state.nh.us

2003 Legislative Agenda

The Commission followed many bills through the House and the Senate this past Legislative session. Some were killed in the early stages, and some made it to the Governor's desk. Below is a breakdown of one the Commission supported. While this Constitutional Amendment-Concurrent was tabled and later voted down, it is still an important issue to the Commission and to the women and girls of New Hampshire.

CACR 10: Relating to gender neutral language in the Constitution and providing that all references to persons in part two of the Constitution shall be gender neutral.

Sponsors: Representatives Norelli, Splaine, Dickinson, Hunt, Irwin; and Senators Larson, Below, Barnes, and Peterson.

This Constitutional Amendment-Concurrent resolution would have removed all gender-specific language from part two of the state constitution and provided that all references to persons in the state constitution be gender neutral.

Gender neutral language in the Constitution is needed for accuracy and precision. For example, article 7 currently reads, "No member of the general court shall take fees, be of counsel, or act as advocate, in any cause before either branch of the legislature; and upon due proof thereof, such member shall forfeit his seat in the legislature." However, the offending legislator might be a woman. CACR 10 would have made the simple change to gender neutral language and would have changed phrases like this that currently assume that men are the norm in these positions.

In an article by Darryl McGrath in *Women's eNews*, Ms. McGrath states that "advocates of gender neutral language

say that it is a subtle and often overlooked aspect of equality, but so pervasive that it affects everyday thinking in the workplace, home and government." Schools, colleges and businesses are, for the most part, already using gender neutral language in their communications. The Constitution, as the major legal referent and standard for behavior, should do no less.

Three New England states have already amended their constitutions to include gender neutral language: Rhode Island, Maine and Vermont. New York, California, Florida and Hawaii have also changed their constitutions for the same purpose. Maybe one day New Hampshire will do the same.

For more information on gender neutral language and CACR 10, please contact the Commission office. Also, you can visit our website to see testimony given by the Commission at last year's public hearing for CACR 10.